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who may neither know nor care much about Sanscrit, but who do feel that the safety of truth lies not in repeating sounding phrases about it, but in honestly living up to it, even when dealing with one's opponents or enemies; who will forgive, even if they regret, warmth of expression, but will never condone intentional misrepresentation. To the arbitrament of that jury he must submit himself, whether he will or no; by its decision must he stand or fall, whether he choose to recognize the tribunal or not; and the sentence it pronounces upon his reputation will be carried out, however much friends may deplore it, or against it partisans protest.

10. — *Life, Letters, and Journals of George Ticknor.* 2 vols. Boston: James R. Osgood and Company. 1876.

THE memoir of Mr. Ticknor is an agreeable and well-written book, rather large, perhaps, for the relative importance of its subject. Mr. Ticknor's public services were rendered as Professor of Belles-Lettres at Harvard University from 1819 to 1835, as the author of a History of Spanish Literature, and as largely influential in founding and regulating the Public Library in Boston. He was a good and enlightened teacher of belles-lettres, acquainted with European universities as well as with European languages, and quite in advance of the views prevailing around him. His History of Spanish Literature is the work of one who loved his subject, and who brought the results of its long-continued and thorough study to put together a work which will not require to be done over again for some generations. As one of the Trustees of the Public Library, and especially as the confidential and trusted adviser of its founder, he showed the same knowledge and genuine love of books, and the same desire to make them acceptable to all who could use them worthily, that he showed on a different scale in the formation and use of his own library.

Mr. Ticknor's social life and character, however, far more than his public work, form the interest of these two volumes which have been widely found interesting. His qualities, his circumstances, and his opportunities were in some things unusual, in many things fortunate. He had the excellent gift of very decided tastes, and the good fortune of entire freedom. From the time when, a very young man, he took the then unusual step of going to study at Göttingen, to the last day of his life, he was singularly unhindered by circumstances. His two marked characteristics were a love of literature and a love of society, and they had full play for sixty years.

For literary occupation he had the qualifications of genuine pleasure in it, of scholarly thoroughness, of a remarkable and well-filled memory, and a just sense of the relation of one part of the commonwealth of letters to another; but he was a *bibliophile* rather than a producer, — one who dwelt gladly in the temple rather than a seer.

His social gifts were many, — a cheerful, equable temper, readiness to make new friends and absolute constancy to old ones, quick appreciation, and response to whatever was interesting or notable, and, as life went on, stores of anecdote and a variety of interesting personal recollections quite unusual in this country. Before going to Europe, Mr. Ticknor had seen familiarly some of the most distinguished people in America, and the same good fortune accompanied him abroad.

The spring of 1815 was an interesting time in England, and Mr. Ticknor caught sight of some of the people whose names belong to a period that was then closing. He saw Dr. Parr, heard Mrs. Siddons recite, and Dr. Rees told in his hearing a story of dining with Dr. Johnson and Boswell. He saw Lord Byron frequently, was with him when he heard the news of Waterloo, and gives interesting glimpses of Lady Byron. The kindness which he received was partly secured no doubt by the letters which he brought, and partly due to his own tact and good manners, but evidently he had the additional advantage of being a surprise. That he wore no wampum was in itself astonishing; but that from the woods where the noble savage was supposed to prevail should issue a well-bred and intelligent young man, familiar with literature and thoroughly appreciative of its magnates, was enough in itself to make a social success.

Mr. Ticknor's next move was to Göttingen, where he lived a student's life for nearly two years, making friends with the people around him, and passed on to their friends when he left the place. In Paris, where he established himself for five months, he saw the best of company, — Wm. Schlegel, Humboldt, Mme. de Staël and her family, Benjamin Constant, Chateaubriand, etc. The journal, which is written always in a good, simple, straightforward fashion, gives sketches of all these people; but neither here nor elsewhere in the book do we get any of those flashes of insight or vivid *aperçus* which give a character in a phrase, and stamp the conception of a great man forever on the memory. The book illustrates completely the saying that we see what we bring. The style runs on clearly and agreeably, but the thoughts and impressions received and conveyed are as absolutely within certain limits as the habitat of a family of plants. Five months in Rome and five months in Spain left time for a second visit

of three months to England and Scotland before returning to Boston, and the journal is again full of the most distinguished names. The Holland House set in London, and Scott, Southey, and Wordsworth in the country, are slightly sketched; and in June, 1819, Mr. Ticknor returned home, ready to begin his work at Cambridge, and with an unfailing spring of affection and interest for the things about him. He entered his professorship in August of the same year, and retained the position for fifteen years, resigning it before his second visit to Europe. These years were passed in almost unbroken prosperity; and more and more Mr. Ticknor's love for, and cultivation of, society made a large part of his life. Society was to him one of the minor fine arts, of which the practice was its own reward. His house was arranged on the footing that society was not an exceptional but an every-day affair, and that it consisted, not in gorgeous exhibitions of any kind, but in the intercourse of cultivated faculties, with due admixture of gayety and novelty. Material adjuncts were well organized and well kept in the background; and in a community quite without real taste for society, Mr. Ticknor's example had a positive value as showing what a pleasant thing it might be.

Leaving America in June, 1835, Mr. Ticknor was for three years in Europe with his family, renewing old friendships and making new ones. The *Life* gives a pleasant account of Dresden, its homely little court, and of the winter spent there in study and society. Travel in Germany followed; and one of the most interesting things in the book is Mr. Ticknor's account of an interview with Metternich, whose notion that revolutions were probable in England and improbable in France reads oddly now. Rome, Paris, and England, with whatever is agreeable in them and on the way to them, filled the time till June, 1838, when Mr. Ticknor came home to stay till 1856. At this time he made another visit to Europe, mainly on account of plans and purchases referring to the Public Library, making nearly nine years spent in Europe during a life of seventy-nine.

No one can read Mr. Ticknor's letters without recognizing that he was a loyal American, but the loyal American of those days was very different from those who could claim the title now. American scholars looked eastward for modes and inspiration; American conditions were held to be good as far as they cohered with English, or were simply received as inferior. American individuality hardly asserted itself, or in a poor-relation fashion which makes one think that our last war was in fact our first Declaration of Independence. Mr. Ticknor's life up to 1856 was steeped in the coloring of foreign influences, and in its remaining years there was more dissonance between the man and his

surroundings than in the happier, earlier period. No other life will be lived in America like Mr. Ticknor's, and this gives an historical value to the memoir quite different from its current agreeableness.

The Boston to which Mr. Ticknor returned in 1838 had a physiognomy quite its own, of which no good portrait exists. Its characteristic quality was perhaps provincialism, but provincialism based on Puritanism, stirred within fixed limits by great activity of mind, and lit up, though hardly enlightened, by some notable men. The logical social results of republican institutions had not yet worked themselves out. Lingering tradition and close-woven associations seemed solid and sure to continue. There were leaders in Israel, — people whose natural vocation it was to decide on important questions, — and who took the crown of the causeway in things intellectual as surely if not as consciously as any red-cloaked Glasgow merchant of old days.

The political creed was Whig, if creed that were which consisted mainly of an unlimited respect for the status quo, and which left its disciples to strike out quite wild when confronted with, or called upon for anything like a principle. Whiggery meant sound views on the tariff, good, quiet management of the elections, a deference for Southern opinion and action which lacked the grace coming from bodily or mental equilibrium, a horror of General Jackson, and a worship of Mr. Webster.

“We that had loved him so, followed him, honored him;

Lived in his ‘dark’ and magnificent eye,”

might have been the phrase of any of the solid men whom the gods had not made poetical, but whose loyal, joyful admiration for Mr. Webster's great gifts and imposing presence had in it an element of real poetry.

A large portion of the better educated classes of Boston at that time were Unitarians. The battle with Calvinism had been fought in Boston by men of keen wits, men of saintly lives, men of a home-spun practicality; and those who filled the Unitarian churches enjoyed a combination of emotions rarely united. The keen joy of truth aggressive and triumphant blended in their consciousness with a tranquil conviction that the limits of truth had been reached. The conservative Unitarianism of that day was a signal example of how much in earnest, how logical, and how peacefully inconsistent human nature may be. Among the able preachers of the new creed, Dr. Channing's reputation has wholly outreached that of his apparent compeers; and to understand the enthusiasm which his sermons created, one must remember for how many hundred years the congregation had heard itself denounced and damned. To hear of one's actual

excellence and possible perfection was a fascinating change, and neither preachers nor congregations troubled themselves to perceive that the weapons which had overthrown orthodoxy were inevitably ruthless against the coherent heterodoxy in which they rested and were thankful.

Society was small, and showed the conditions which belong to small societies, — interest in each other's affairs and close oversight of each other's actions ; a great admiration of conceded excellence, modified by occasional comments too personal to be dignified as criticism ; an instinctive horror of revolutionary opinions, however speciously disguised ; and a rigidity which made its dissolution a necessary preliminary to growth. Add to these the kindliness of neighborhood, the benignities of assured superiority, and a certain intellectual stir which kept the surface from stagnation, and we get a notion of what may fairly be called Old Boston, which felt itself permanent even while its doom was written on the wall.

In the centre of Whiggism grew up Antislavery, and society with the instinct of self-preservation found vivid amusement in the long-haired men and dithyrambic women who preached the new faith. How ludicrous, how ill-bred, how intolerably troublesome they were, Boston was aware ; also how fit and even necessary it was that they should be silenced. The feelings of our Southern friends were to be considered, and our comfort demanded energy. They were but a handful, quite incapable of political effect ; in fact one knew the secret motive of each of them ; but in any case, silence them ; break up the meetings ; put Mr. Garrison in jail for safe-keeping ; *keep them quiet !*

All this had its natural result ; the handful became a nation, and, what was worse, one and another of those whom Boston delighted to honor joined themselves to this crew of fanatics. The history of Antislavery is the history of the country. We all know the price and the penalty paid, and one of the small side-issues was the breaking up in Boston of a social condition which had not the cement of impersonal truth, though even the beginning of the end was not visible till some years after Mr. Ticknor's return.

Into the cool fortresses of Unitarianism, also, about these days (1841), strode a champion who struck the shield till the walls rang, and then blew the horn till far-away echoes answered. Mr. Theodore Parker took up the balances in which the founders of Unitarianism had weighed the creeds of the world, and proposed to weigh the founders. It was with natural pangs and protests, and with hands clinging fast to what they counted their own, that the leaders

met the assault. What else could they do but raise the hue and cry? Mr. Parker had their own weapon in his hands; their position was utterly untenable; they had helped to establish the propositions with which he confuted them, and alas! it is not given to all to die with dignity. Contemporaneous with these two influences, and interacting with them, but, as it were, chemically rather than mechanically, Transcendentalism became a power in Boston. Whatever may be the value of this movement for the world at large, it was a greatly needed solvent in the place where it grew up; it questioned values, it ignored conventions; it called on whatever was "*viable*" to answer for itself or else to disappear; it heard composedly the shrieks of misbelief, unbelief, disbelief, which assailed it; it gave great help toward showing that freedom, instead of bearing the same relation to its opposite as is shown in Talleyrand's definition of non-intervention, "*un mot political et métaphysique qui veut dire à peu près la même chose que l'intervention,*" meant free speech, free opinion, free living.

Taking three men as roughly representative, Mr. Garrison, Mr. Parker, and Mr. Emerson were the three most influential men in Boston of the years between 1836 and 1860; and it is not uncharacteristic of what in America calls itself good society, that it had no part in any of them.

In 1849 Mr. Ticknor's "History of Spanish Literature" was published, and he enjoyed the pleasure of seeing the chief work of his life praised by competent critics, and more generally interesting than he had anticipated. The creation and organization of the Public Library in Boston supplied perhaps the strongest new interest after Mr. Ticknor's book was finished, and he furnished sound views and much careful work towards its successful arrangement. There was a dramatic propriety in this occupation of his closing years; to know, to collect, and to use books himself had been the work of his youth and middle life; to collect and arrange them for the use of others was a main interest of his decline. His letters before and during the war are not more desponding than was inevitable; he is ready to do what he holds to be his duty as a citizen; but it is war, not slavery, which seems to him the intolerable evil.

Mr. Ticknor died in 1871, after a life of unusual industry, equanimity, and happiness, of which the memoir gives a clear and good account; and we know of no American book so thick-set with names and sketches of distinguished and interesting people.